



THE DEMON OF
LERMONTOFF



Demon

Mikhail Lermontov , Dennis Ward

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This book contains the Russian text of Lermontov's *Demon*, edited with an English language introduction and notes

Demon Details

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Anastasia says

*Read for class.

Unfortunately, I expected to like it more than I actually did. But it was still pretty good, I don't regret reading this, of course. And the whole concept of Angel and Demon falling in love with Tamara, but how different their love it! That was wonderfully shown and done, I liked moment that a lot. But it didn't make me feel things like I wanted to.

Sebastian says

A damned demon wanders earth, and joy of love allowed him to shed his first tear. But will he bring joy to her he loves?

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StefanP says

Sve što je jednostavno to je i savršeno, pa tako i Ljermontov Demon. Ovo je jedna nihilisti?ko-romanti?arska poema ispisana u hri?anskom duhu sa primjesom misti?nog iz stare vjere. Napušten od svih, usamljen i moren psihi?kim i moralnim pobudama tako Demon traži plemenitost obe?avaju?i razne iluzije jednoj ženi. Taj duh vje?nosti traži da bude ovaplo?en kroz duh ovozemaljski. Demon negira sve kako bi to postigao, pa tako govori da je bog zauzet nebom i da ga ne zanima ovaj svijet. Kroz sve to ovdje dolazi do jednog bliskog odnosa izme?u Tamare i Demona, odnosno tjelesnog i bestjelesnog. Neka sila uvijek nadvladava ljudsko

bi?e. Pa tako Demon pruža bespovratnost.

Jay says

Lermontov is known to all Russian speakers, but basically unknown to the rest of the world. He's like the FOIL of Pushkin. Where Pushkin was understanding, Lermontov was solitary, where Pushkin loved, Lermontov hated. The poetry is master work, I'm not sure however if it's ever any good in English, I've never read it in English, so... whatever. If you like Russia and consider yourself a Russophile, you should know who this is and have read him.

Mirish says

Demon:

"çox r?hb?r olmad?m m?n insanlara
günah öyr?tm?dim çok da onlara."

?blis:

"m?nsiz d? ?min ol siz? r?hb?rlik ed?n var,
od püskür?n, at?? savuran kinli krallar."

Florencia says

Where the land knows no time
where bonfires have no end,
and doomed shadows often tend
to mutter songs that poorly rhyme,

there lies the Demon, another prey of his kingdom.

*and one by one the ages passed,
as minute follows after minute,
each one monotonously dull.*

Tired of his empire, he soon claimed
a small thrill,
a world of chance,
an emerald hill,
somebody's glance.
“I shall live now!”, he naively exclaimed.

*And long he gazed, with fascination,
at the sweet view; as if in a dream*

The wide earth he started to wander;
on the Caucasian mountains he stopped,
a desperate sigh of hope there he dropped,
as he saw the bride that made him ponder

and filled his soul with chords and joy.

words came no more . . . had he forgot?

Princess Tamara was her divine name;
but heavens didn't forgive
his eyes made of fire,
no one could outlive
the nature of his desire,
as the weeping chants of fate abruptly came;

such solitude on the sunless face of pride.

*The crafty Demon with infernal
reveries had tempted him; in thoughts
beneath the gloom, the shades nocturnal,
it was his sweetheart's lips he sought.*

There is no redemption for those who can't speak
nor freely touch; in this land or far above
where everything's whiter than a pale dove,
amidst the bluest ocean or a Caucasian peak;
an eternal misfortune, silent and bleak,
the suffering of being unable to love—

another Russian friend thus wrote.

*A cry resounded, tortured, fierce,
troubling the stillnesses nocturnal.
In it were love, and pain's hard kernel,
reproaches, a last desperate prayer,
and then a hopeless, an eternal*

farewell to life—all these were there.

We hurt the things we love most,
things so distant and of silence full;
fair signs which existence was null,
people never found yet always lost.

As the sound of the piano reaches the end,
Lermontov's poetry invades this mind,
a torrent of thoughts, loud and blind;
no hope of ever being able to find
meaning in these lines vainly penned.

Words that rest on nobody's palm,
destined to hide from the world's sight;
words without any music, beat or calm.

Jan 10, 16

* Also on my blog.

Jane (yesmissjane) says

I was prompted to read this by a video Conrad from Just a Dust Jacket made. It is fairly short, and the translation I read (by Robert Burness) was easy to read.

The story is basically: a demon looks down and sees a beautiful young girl dancing with her girl friends as she awaits the arrival of her groom on what was to be their wedding day. He falls for her, and so goes and tempts the bridegroom into an act of impetuosity which results in his death. The girl, Tamara, in her grief asks her father to send her to a convent, which he does. The demon seeks her out at the convent, and though she is initially hostile towards him, he continues to woo her, and then...

I found the section in the convent where Tamara went seeking escape from the griefs and trials of life, but instead finding only a lack of distraction which if anything accentuates her internal troubles to be moving and insightful. It made an interesting echo to another book I read recently 'The Anchoress' which spends a lot of time dealing with this same idea. Apart from this section, however, Tamara seems to be mostly a beautiful, desired object rather than a person, with the poem being much more interested in what's going on with the demon. Which I guess is what it is, but 'troubled older guy who gets the hots for a beautiful young woman, and ruins her life as a result' is hardly new ground in fiction, and it totally made me think of the immortal words of Kat Stratford from 10 things I hate about you: 'I guess in this society, being male and an asshole makes you worthy of our time.'

Fil says

It is hard to understand why Lermontov is not a household name in 'The West', maybe it's because he died at age 26 and left so few works, who knows? Anyhoo, 'The Demon' is another brilliant effort by the author of 'A Hero Of Our Time'.

The Devil (slightly reminiscent of Milton's Lucifer) is more than a one-dimensional villain here. He feels, he longs, hell(!) he hurts. A human, a woman named Tamara, finds herself the object of the demon's love. Working his nefarious magic, he manipulates circumstances to suit his needs. His 'je ne sais quoi' has the desired effect but there might be certain obstacles to overcome...

Ivona says

Neskute?n? emotivní a nádherné. :-)

Jsem ten, jenž pouhým zrakem zni?í
kv?t rodící se nad?je,
jejž nemiluje srdce ni?í
a každý ho jen prokleje.

Mám ráj i peklo v o?ích tvých.
Já nadpozemsky miluji t?
láskou, již nem?žeš ty znát.
Jsou touhy vášnivé v mých citech
i síla, kterou jsem kdy vlád.

Jelena says

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Lauralee says

This poem is the reason I have degree in Russian. I translated each Romantic word with love and adoration. The Devil falls for a maiden (in a convent), which is really the Tzar ravishing his land/people. I couldn't get enough of Lermontov.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Demon, Mikhail Lermontov

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Narrative Poems By: Alexander Pushkin, And By: Mikhail Lermontov, Translated by: Charles Johnston,

Introduction By: Kyril Fitzlyon

Alexander Pushkin: ONEGIN'S JOURNEY, GRAF NULIN, MOZART AND SALIERI, THE BRONZE HORSEMAN

Mikhail Lermontov: THE TAMBOV LADY, THE NOVICE, THE DEMON

Anna K?avi?a says

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Ffiamma says

[il demone]
io sono colui la cui voce ascoltavi,
tu, nel silenzio della mezzanotte,
il cui pensiero all'anima parlava,
la cui tristezza tu riconoscesti,
la cui immagine vedevi in sogno.
il mio sguardo uccide ogni speranza;
io sono colui che nessuno può amare.
dei miei terreni schiavi sono la frusta,
sono il signore di scienza e libertà;
nemico del cielo, son della natura
il male. e sono qui, ai piedi tuoi!
per la tua tenerezza t'ho portato
la placida preghiera dell'amore,
il mio primo dolore sulla terra,
e le lacrime prime che ho versato.
ascoltami, ti prego, per pietà.
soltanto tu con la tua voce puoi
restituire me al bene e al cielo.
protetto dal mantello del tuo amore
a me sarà concesso di salire
lassù, angelo nuovo in nuova luce;
o, ti prego: ascoltami soltanto:
io sono il tuo schiavo. e ti amo!"

Book Wyrm says

A lonely demon falls passionately in love with a human girl, Tamara, and the inevitable tragedy happens. Holy crap, a poem I actually like, mainly because it feels more like a prose piece with rhyming. This is sublimely worded, full of gorgeous imagery, a sensuous feel, with lots of talk of lips and 'earthly love', and much sympathy for the devil with its descriptions of the Demon's agonising and hopeless eternity, all blending together into something deliciously melancholy.

Considering Tamara spends a third of the poem close to suicidal after the loss of her husband, pining incessantly, it is a little odd how she rebounds so quickly with our unnamed Demon. Our heroine is ye olde sort of sublime woman, however, whose gentle heart is immediately compelled to ease the suffering of a tortured soul, despite the whole murdering her husband and siding with the Prince of Darkness business. I can see why this was so popular with the Symbolists, the 'perfect, submissive feminine' accepting the unloved, yet great and powerful Demon: a perfect analogy for every late 19thC Symbolist artist, bitching about how horrible the New Woman is for turning him down to do selfish and unwomanly things like campaigning for voting rights, or marrying someone less bloody whiney.

Thankfully that incel projection is not in the poem itself, which is frankly gorgeous, tragic and worth the brief amount of time it'll take you to digest. It's also considerably less stupid than *City of Angels* (if anyone even remembers that awful film).
